Don't Forget About Sub-Saharan Africa
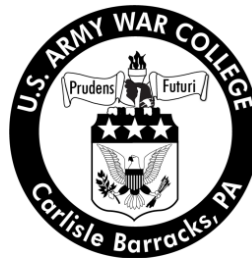
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Don't Forget About Sub-Saharan Africa

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Abstract

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Sub–Sahara Africa faces a growing crisis of radical Islamic group expansion and increase internal instability. Failure of the United States to support the security development of Mali and Nigeria risks continuing the cycle of instability plaguing Somalia. Help must take the form of a long–term commitment to the economic, political and security development of a still developing and unstable region of the world. Africa must not suffer the consequence of United States shifting strategic interest to the Pacific. Continuing the trend of episodic interest and limited engagement in Sub–Saharan Africa places the security of the people of the United States at risk.

Don't Forget About Sub-Saharan Africa

No African country can face this kind of threat alone. This is an international war that is being fought in Mali. We have done what we can. Now others need to come and help us.

—Col Seydou Sogoba
Malian Army[1]

In January 2012, President Barak Obama and Secretary of Defense Leon Panetta announced a "rebalance toward the Asia – Pacific region" in order to confront the rising economic and security challenges outlined in the Defense Strategic Guidance, *Sustaining U.S. Global Leadership: Priorities for 21st Century Defense.*[2] While Pacific nations such as China, India, and North Korea clearly present strategic challenges requiring a greater focus from all elements of United States national power; the nations of Sub–Saharan Africa also require increased engagement and support from the United States in order to fulfill the security strategy outlined by the president. After eleven years of war against Islamic extremists, protecting the homeland from a terrorist attack remains a vital national security interest. The President and Secretary of Defense highlighted in their guidance the United States' commitment to "continue to take an active approach to countering these threats."[3] Resource constraints make this an increasingly complex challenge.

With economic resource constraints potentially limiting United States global engagement options, the United States must not revert to an episodic or limited engagement policy in Sub-Saharan Africa in order to fulfill the strategy of rebalancing to the Pacific. The challenges resident in Sub-Saharan Africa require a strategy of persistent United States commitment in economic, political and military partnership in order to reverse the current trends of Al Qaida terrorist network expansion. The threat of

global terrorist expansion cannot be ignored, making Sub-Saharan Africa an important national security interest for the foreseeable future; even in light of the rebalance toward Asia. Additionally, factors contributing to terrorism such as transnational criminal organizations and human rights abuses in areas such as Mali and Nigeria require strategic commitments from the United States and regional allies to reverse these negative trends. Interwoven within these national interests is the opportunity to confront Chinese global influence in Africa in support of the rebalance to the Pacific. Examining United States and United Nations efforts in Somalia over the last 30 years provides a regional case study of the impact of an episodic engagement policy on a failing state. However, relying on a strategy of African institutions solving what are not only African problems comes with limitations in capability and capacity required to confront the full spectrum of challenges in this complex environment.

The developed world enabled many of the current conditions contributing to the problems on the African continent and must be prepared to commit the resources and national will required to achieve lasting positive growth for the African people. In examining a global strategy to counter the conditions contributing to global terrorism following the 2001 terrorist attacks, the 9/11 Commission concluded the "process is likely to be measured in decades, not years."[4] This paper will examine what are the United States' interests in Sub–Saharan Africa and examine the case study of United States strategy in Somalia. The paper will conclude with a proposed policy and resource recommendation for Mali and Nigeria. I intend to argue the challenges in the region of Sub–Saharan Africa are in the interest of the United States in terms of security, the global rise of China, confronting transnational criminal networks, and fostering human

rights in developing countries. The case study of United States involvement in Somalia along with an examination of African Union operations in Somalia provide historical indicators of the likely impact of United States failure to provide long–term support to stability operations in Mali and Nigeria.

<div align="center">Why Mali and Nigeria Matter</div>

The countries of Sub–Saharan Africa struggle with numerous security and development challenges in areas such as the rise of Islamic extremism, post–colonial economic development, natural resource exploitation, transnational criminal organizations, disease, and human rights abuses. In an era of globalization, the impact of these challenges is not limited to just Sub–Saharan Africa.

<u>Terrorism</u>

The 2011 *National Strategy for Counterterrorism*, outlines one of the President's "top national security priorities: disrupting, dismantling, and eventually defeating al-Qaida."[5] While much of the focus for counterterrorism is on the Middle East, Sub–Saharan Africa's role in global terrorism pre-dates the attacks in New York in September 2001. While Afghanistan was seen as base for Al Qaida operations, training centers also operated in Somalia and Sudan.[6] After fleeing Sudan in 1996, Osama bin Laden maintained connections with groups in Algeria and Somalia.[7] Secretary Panetta articulated the concern of Al Qaida's expansive network when he spoke with reporters in October 2012 stating: "the U.S. must work with nations in the region to ensure that al-Qaida has no place to hide and expand its capabilities."[8] Unfortunately, Al Qaida's presence in Africa continues to expand in spite of United States' efforts. A February 2005 Congressional Research Service report on removing terrorist sanctuaries highlighted, "international terrorist organizations continue to use Africa as a safe-haven,

<div align="center">3</div>

staging area, or transit point to target U.S. interests."[9] Furthermore, the report indicates

"the Sahel region of Africa has grown vulnerable to terrorism."[10] The assessment in

2005 accurately states "the international terror threat against U.S. and local national

interests is likely to continue to grow in several parts of Africa because of porous

borders, lax security, political instability, and a lack of state resources and capacities."[11]

The prediction of Al Qaida sanctuaries in Mali and Nigeria included in "The 9/11

Commission Report" in 2002 and the Congressional Research Service report in 2005

now appears a reality.[12]

The threat emanating from Mali is a complex combination of Tuareg rebels with a

long standing conflict with the central government and Al Qaida aligned Islamic

extremists including Al Qaida in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM).[13] Speaking at the

Homeland Security Policy Institute in December 2012, the United States Africa

Command (AFRICOM) Commander, General Carter Ham commented "as each day

goes by, Al Qaida and other organizations are strengthening their hold in northern

Mali."[14] Additionally, Senator Christopher A. Coons (D-Del), chairman of the Senate

Foreign Relations subcommittee on Africa, called northern Mali "the largest territory

controlled by Islamic extremists in the world."[15] These factions in Mali are also reported

to have acquired weapons from Libyan weapons depots.[16] In what could be a further

indicator of inter-connections between Africa's Islamic terror organizations, "officials

have linked Al Qaida in the Islamic Maghreb to the attack at the U.S. Consulate in

Benghazi."[17]

Along with Mali, the 9/11 report predicted an expansion of terrorist threats to

Nigeria. Again, strategies by both Nigeria and the United States failed to halt the rise of

Boko Haram. In August 2011, the group carried out suicide attacks on the United Nations Headquarters in the Nigerian capital of Abuja and since 2009, the Boko Haram insurgency has claimed approximately 3,000 lives.[18] In 2011, Jennifer Cooke from the Center for Strategic and International Studies commented before the House Committee on Homeland Security on Boko Haram. In her statement she articulated the fear of future attacks on western interest in Nigeria as well as the possibility of future "collusion with Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb."[19] In December 2012, General Ham seemed to confirm her prediction with his remarks concerning Boko Haram traveling to Mali for financing and explosive training, "we have seen clear indications on collaborations among the organizations."[20]

Recent events in Algeria continue to highlight the potential impact of these organizations in Mali and Nigeria. In her January 23rd testimony before Congress, Secretary of State Hillary Clinton said "the growing international campaign against Islamic fighters in Northern Mali was a response to a very serious, ongoing threat."[21] She added, "instability in Mali has created an expanding safe haven for terrorists who look to extend their influence and plot further attacks of the kind we saw just last week in Algeria."[22] A week prior to her testimony on January 16th, an Al Qaida in the Islamic Maghreb affiliated group attacked a natural gas plant in Algeria seizing 134 workers including ten American citizens.[23] The Al-Mulathameen Brigade led by Moktar Belmoktar carried out the attack following the French operation in Mali.[24] Potential future targets for these groups include the Texas based Anadarko Petroleum Corporation which produces 350,000 barrels of oil a day in Algeria.[25]

China

While United States strategic focus shifts to the pacific to counter China, China
continues to expand its interests in Africa. The investments by China fill a void in some
African nations left by the drop in foreign direct investment after the Cold War.[26] One of
China's primary purposes for engaging in Africa is to gain access to resources in order
to fuel its growing economy.[27] Africa provides access to both oil and mineral resources
critical to future economic growth. Additionally, Africa provides an emerging market for
low-cost Chinese goods.[28] However, Chinese interests and investments do not
necessarily translate to increase stability in African nations. In fact, the introduction of
cheap Chinese goods is having a negative impact on local African manufacturing and
employment.[29] In one area, Nigerian textile factories were forced to close as a result of
their inability to compete with cheap Chinese imports.[30] Additionally, Chinese economic
activity in Africa may in fact "make U.S. firms less competitive and diminish U.S.
influence.[31] In order to move out of the cycle of exploitation that has plagued Africa for
decades, Africa needs to develop a growing economy to counter the conditions of
poverty fostering instability.

A second area of interest for China is in the area of "forging strategic
partnerships."[32] In building strategic alliances, China follows a policy of "noninterference
in the internal affairs" of potential partner nations.[33] This policy frees China of often
restrictive conditions western nations place on African countries in the areas of
governance and human rights.[34] This policy increases Chinese influence with respect to
gaining international support for Chinese Taiwan strategies, while serving as a counter
to United States global influence.[35] Through increased influence in Africa, China gained
votes in the United Nations blocking a UN vote to condemn China for human rights

abuses.[36] China also looks to gain international support concerning the dispute with Taiwan by insisting on African nations recognizing the "one China" policy and severing diplomatic ties with Taiwan.[37] China also provides economic aid to various nations. In 2011, the Chinese provided Mali with millions in aid to "improve the living standards of Malian people."[38] As the United States rebalances toward the Pacific to engage the rise of Chinese influence, China continues to expand both economic and diplomatic efforts in Africa. The United States strategic rebalance must include efforts to counter Chinese influence in Africa as well as the Asia–Pacific region.

<u>Transnational Crime</u>

A contributing factor to instability and a national interest concern for the United States in many of the Sub–Saharan nations is the wide spread presence of criminal organizations inter-woven with terrorist networks. These criminal networks provide funding enabling terrorist operations in Sub–Saharan Africa. "Disrupting the access of terrorists to sources of financial support" is highlighted in the National Strategy for Counterterrorism.[39] "Rivalries over the control of smuggling and state officials' tolerance of criminal activity by political allies allowed extremists groups to flourish."[40] Similar to the development of piracy in Somalia, "the importance of organized criminal activity in the Sahel–Sahara stems from the fact that there are few alternative activities that produce similar profits and rapid enrichment."[41] In fact, Mokhtar Belmokhar, one of the leading figures in AQIM and reportedly connected to the 2013 Algerian oil field attack, is widely thought "to have long run a cigarette smuggling racket across the Sahara."[42] Kidnapping for ransom has also proved lucrative for the terrorist networks with AQIM and MUJAO claiming an estimated $40 to $65 million since 2008.[43] Furthermore, these criminal networks impact the ability to provide effective governance. During a recent

conference on Mali, Dr. Joseph Siegle, Director of Research at the Africa Center commented on the impact of criminal networks on the Malian government. He stated that the "Malian government institutions had grown increasingly hollow, in large part due to corruption and cooption by the narcotics networks."[44] Efforts to improve the interest of national security are interwoven with the challenges of crime and economic development.

<u>Human Rights</u>

In addition to the national interest of defending the homeland against the threat of terrorism, the protection of human rights is also an important national interest for the United States in Sub-Saharan Africa. Relying on episodic engagement or limited counter-terrorist strikes alone fails to address the issue of human suffering on the continent. United Nations secretary general Ban Ki-Moon commented on northern Mali: "where people are subjected to a very strict interpretation of Sharia law and human rights are abused on a systematic basis."[45] As of July 2012, Mali contained over 350,000 internally displaced persons as a result of the conflict.[46] According to Human Rights Watch, "groups have recruited several hundred children into their forces; carried out executions, floggings, and at least eight amputations as punishment."[47] Corinne Dufka, senior Africa researcher at Human Rights Watch added: "the Islamist armed groups have become increasingly repressive as they have tightened their grip over northern Mali."[48]

In an October 2012 report, Human Rights Watch sounded a similar tone on Nigeria: "widespread and systematic murder and persecution by Boko Haram likely amount to crimes against humanity."[49] Additional reporting holds Boko Haram responsible for 1,500 dead with 815 of those occurring from January to September of

2012 alone.[50] However, government security forces are no less suspect of fostering

instability as Human Rights Watch also included the accusation of their role in in

numerous abuses, including extrajudicial killings.[51] These abuses by the security forces

are counterproductive to the efforts of good governance to prevent terrorism and add an

additional complexity to any effort to bring stability to the region. A greater expansion of

the terrorist threat as a result of continued human rights abuses risks drawing the

United States into a more costly effort in Nigeria in the future.

Lessons of U.S. Policy in Somalia

Over the last several decades, the United States viewed Africa as an area of

strategic importance; however the reasons have varied over time. National interest rose

and fell in relation to external United States geopolitical interests. In fact, much of the

focus of United States policy in the post-World War II environment focused on Cold War

Soviet–American relations, and not independent growth of African prosperity.[52] Much of

the aid provided to Africa focused on interests in the Indian Ocean, access to strategic

minerals, or in "rewarding or punishing a country's particular voting record" in relation to

Cold War politics.[53] However, failure to provide long-term, persistent economic and

political development to nations not tied to Cold War interests failed to prevent the

current environment of instability resident in much of Sub–Saharan Africa. Former

Defense Intelligence Agency analyst William Thom drew the linkage to United States

interests stating: "Lawlessness in Africa constitutes a threat to the United States in

terms of terrorist breeding grounds, organized crime, drug trafficking, small arms

proliferation, severe political instability, and global health issues."[54]

The United States maintained a poor track record for remaining focused on these

issues and risked negatively impacting our national credibility in the region. In

commenting on the United States' role in foreign affairs, University of South Florida

professor Dr. F. Ugboaja Ohaegbulam wrote "traditionally, U.S. policy makers have not

perceived America's interests in Africa as fundamental or vital."[55] In an era of

globalization and transnational terrorist organizations, even the most remote corner of

the world can pose a threat such as the terrorist attacks as evidenced by Afghanistan in

2001. In Africa, the international community faces the challenge of the spread of Islamic

extremism in the remote northern portions of Mali and Nigeria.

The history of United States involvement in Somalia provides one example of the

cost of episodic interest in a failing nation. Whitney Schneidman and Brandon Routman

wrote in *Foreign Policy*: "if there is any lesson to be learned from two decades of crisis

and conflict in Somalia, it is that inattention and inaction by the international community

fuels instability and enables conflict to spread beyond borders."[56] Throughout the last 30

years, the United States failed to view Somalia beyond short term strategic interests

and failed to develop and implement a long-term stability program to create a

sustainable economic and political environment. Ambassador Mohamed Sahnoun, the

United Nation's Special Representative in Somalia wrote in 1994: "if the international

community had intervened earlier and more effectively in Somalia, much of the

catastrophe that has unfolded could have been avoided."[57]

Dr. Hussein Adam identifies three of these early missed opportunities for the

United States which, if acted on earlier, may have altered the course of Somalia's

collapse. The first missed opportunity by the United States was when Somalia broke

ties with the Soviet Union following the 1977-78 Ogaden War. The United States failure

to address political reform and issues of human rights allowed the Siyad Barre regime to

continue under an ineffective government. The second missed opportunity was the failure of the United States to cut military and economic aid to Somalia in the wake of the 1988 insurrection in northern Somalia resulting in over half a million displaced persons. The Pentagon reportedly did not support reducing aid out of fear of losing access to regional military bases. The third missed opportunity to avoid the crisis was in 1990 just before the fall of Siyad Barre's regime. Failure of the international community to fully support the national reconciliation conference missed an opportunity for political reform before the devastating impact of famine.[58]

The impact of the famine in Somalia increased United States interest to the region on the basis of the humanitarian crisis. Following the 1991 collapse of central authority and the simultaneous humanitarian disaster in Somalia, President George H. W. Bush authorized Operation Restore Hope in November 1992. "Bush administration officials argued that the United States had to intervene because of the "massive proportions" of the tragedy and because the United States had the means to "do something about it."[59] The full scale effects of the famine demonstrated on television as well as post-presidential election politics played a role in the decision to finally intervene with military force in Somalia.[60] However, following the tragic events in Mogadishu where eighteen Americans were killed, the national will to continue the effort in Somalia changed. President Clinton authorized the withdrawal of United States in March 1994 which was soon followed by the withdrawal of UN forces in 1995. Without United States and United Nations support, and without a central government, Somalia soon splintered along clan based divisions.[61] In his analysis, Dr. Ohaegbulam concluded the United States was unwilling "to commit lives, resources, and time to the challenges of nation

building in an African country which they perceived had no apparent strategic significance to U.S. security interests."[62]

In an effort to maintain national credibility, President Clinton attempted to argue against withdrawal. President Clinton issued a statement on October 7, 1993 reference Somalia: "If we were to leave today, we know what would happen….Our leadership in world affairs would be undermined at the very time when people are looking to America to help promote peace and freedom in the post-Cold War world."[63] Additionally, the international efforts failed to establish a fully functioning, credible central government where "he continued absence of central authority in Somalia created an environment conducive to the proliferation of armed factions throughout the country."[64] In his conclusions on the American efforts in Somalia in the early 1990's, Ambassador Robert Oakely sounded a similar tone to President Clinton's prediction of United State influence in the region. Ambassador Oakley concluded "total absence of U.S. participation is an error which diminishes U.S. influence generally and hampers the potential effectiveness of any particular operation."[65]

Failure to achieve stability during the subsequent years gave rise to clan warfare and the terrorist group Al–Shabaab. The subsequent growth of Al–Shabaab elevated the United States national interest in Somalia once again, this time for counter-terrorism as part of the United States larger efforts to defeat Al Qaida. In September 2009, the United States killed Saleh Ali Saleh Nabhan, "a senior Al Qaida member suspected of attacks against U.S. embassies in Kenya and Tanzania and the leader of the terrorist attack against the Paradise Hotel in Mombasa, Kenya in 2002."[66] While the death of Nabhan disrupted the leadership of Al–Shabaab according to Somali security sources,

his death failed to eliminate the threat from the extremist organization.[67] Hady Amr from the Brookings Institute wrote in 2010:

> Short-term counter-terrorism measures, like the removal of Al-Qaeda operatives such as Nabhan are useful, but the international community should invest in capacity-building to strengthen local political and economic institutions by allocating more aid to initiatives that focus on sustainable development and promote good governance in the country; this would work to stem the tide of terrorism in the long-term.[68]

While judging the greatest threat from Al–Shabaab is internal to Somalia and East Africa, then Director of National Intelligence Dennis Blair stated at a Senate Select Committee hearing in February 2009: "East Africa-based Al Qaeda leaders or Al-Shabaab may elect to redirect to the homeland some of the Westerners, including North Americans, now training and fighting in Somalia."[69] Almost two decades after conducting limited humanitarian operations in Somalia, the United States still confronts the threat of terrorism and piracy off the Horn of Africa, while Somalia struggles to move forward facing the destabilizing force of al-Shabaab.

African Union Mission in Somalia

The AFRICOM strategy for Sub–Saharan Africa relies heavily on the abilities of African partner nations.[70] However, this strategy comes with limitations demonstrated in the Somalia case study. In attempting to form an African solution to African problems, the United Nations Security Council passed a resolution "reiterating its commitment to a comprehensive and lasting settlement of the situation in Somalia" on December 6, 2006.[71] Two months later, United Nations Security Council passed resolution 1744 "authorizing the African Union to establish a mission in Somalia."[72] Even with a clear United Nations mandate, the African Union response took years to fully materialize. The African Union generally been viewed as being "lethargic and slow in responding to crisis

and conflict situations across the continent."[73] While "the first AMISOM troops were deployed to Mogadishu on 6 March 2007, it took over three years to reach its originally authorized strength of 8,000 peacekeepers."[74] By the fall of 2012, the African Union force reached a size of nearly 17,000 and had made gains against Al–Shabaab around Mogadishu.[75] However, the shortcoming in force size has limited operations outside of Mogadishu.[76] During a 2011 conference which included African Union, United Nations, Transitional Federal Government, United States and British representatives, a recommended a required force size of 35,000 necessary to stabilize a region the size of Somalia.[77] However, "politics at the UN Security Council and Africa's inability and lack of appetite to deploy forces to Somalia ruled out such a large force" resulting in the deployment of only 17,000 troops.[78] Additionally, the "UN's support package for AMISOM did not explicitly provide for the significant levels of operational support necessary to build an effective Somali National Security Force."[79] AMISOM forces also lack capabilities in specific enablers specifically engineer, aviation and intelligence capabilities.[80]

In writing an assessment of AMISOM operations and capabilities in 2011, AMISOM commander General Nathan Mugisha further articulates the shortfalls in AMISOM capability. The original UN mandate in 2007 called for an AMISOM force of 8,000 troops to carry out a range of tasks well beyond its capability. He contrasts the force size to that of UNOSOM II with a force size of 28,000 personnel as well as the US mission in Iraq with a force size of 160,000 troops in 2007. He highlights the US force ratio of 1:187 US to Iraqi citizen in contrast to the 1:1,125 AMISOM to Somali citizen.[81] General Mugisha's assessment of the impact of the delay in the deployment of

adequate troop numbers: "In terms of tactics, the delay in deploying adequate troop numbers and equipment, coupled with the continued infusion of foreign fighters with experience and skills gained from other theaters especially, though not exclusively, in the Middle East, has seen the insurgency become increasingly sophisticated."[82]

This same pace of African operations appears to be playing out in Mali. Nigeria pledged to send 900 troops to Mali by January 19th, but as of January 28th had only deployed about 200 troops to support the French efforts.[83] Once again part of the problem remains lack of logistics capability of the Africa nations. The recent deployment of troops from Togo demonstrates the lack of logistic capability of African nations. Togo's movement of 145 troops took "two days and four separate flights for the troops to arrive, because they needed to borrow the president's jet, which seats only 45."[84] Prior to the French intervention, the United States assessed it could take almost 12 months to deploy an African force to Mali from the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS).[85] An African solution to the problems in Mali and Nigeria is a preferred solution, but one that will still require a long term commitment from the United States to fill the gap in stability operations behind the French as well as significant enablers to ensure the full capability of the forces are employed to help stabilize the region.

Recommendations for US Policy in Mali and Nigeria

In multiple strategic documents, the United States articulates a strong commitment to the nations of Sub–Saharan Africa. In President Obama's *U.S. Strategy Toward Sub–Saharan Africa* published in June 2012, he articulates his commitment to Sub–Saharan Africa with the understanding "that Africa is a fundamental part of our interconnected world."[86] This strategy is based on his commitment to Africa outlined in

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the *National Security Strategy* of May 2010 particularly in terms of investments in long–term development initiatives.[87] Specifically to combat terrorism, the United States established the interagency program called *Trans–Sahara Counterterrorism Partnership* (TSCTP) in 2005. The TSCTP is designed to enhance the capabilities of North African nations to combat terrorism and was intended to prevent AQIM from expanding across Sub–Saharan Africa.[88] Building Partner Capacity is also a component of the Department of Defense strategy released in 2012. Furthermore, General Ham continued this focus in his posture statement before the House Armed Services Committee. General Ham stated the U.S. Africa Command objective to "strengthen partnerships and reduce threats to America."[89]

However, in order to achieve the desired endstates for Sub–Saharan Africa outlined in these strategic documents, United States policy must remain engaged throughout challenging economic periods and the rebalance toward Asia–Pacific interests. The case study of Somalia demonstrates the impact of episodic interests in a failing state and the resulting requirements for reengagement. Failure to fully support long–term stability programs risks repeating the failures in Somalia, to include a continuation of extremist threats to international security and further human rights violations against innocent civilians.

In order for these initiatives to progress, one policy and legal area for immediate consideration is the limitation on direct military and economic engagement with Mali as a result of the coup in March 2012. Section 7008 of the *Department of State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs Appropriations Act* of 2012 restricts the United States' ability to utilize funding to assist Mali following the March 2012 coup.[90] As a

result, on April 10, 2012 the United States halted assistance to Mali to include funding

for the Malian Department of Health, school construction, government supported

agricultural production, support for democratic elections, and military engagement.[91]

Assistant Secretary of State Johnnie Carson reiterated this position on February 22

stating: "if Democracy returns [to Mali] we will immediately resume our development

assistance, we will resume our military cooperation."[92] In order to address the strategic

security interest from the threat of terrorism in northern Mali, the United States cannot

afford to wait for the reestablishment of a democratically elected government in Mali.

While effective, democratically elected government is a key component of fighting the

contributing factors of insurgencies as seen in Somalia, addressing the complex

transnational security threat requires a non-sequential ordering of military support to

developing nations. The primary national interest for the United States is the threat to

the homeland or western regional interests from terrorists groups such as AQIM or Boko

Haram. As such, the support for national security organizations should take a priority

over the establishment of democratic institutions.

As outlined in the Somalia case study, working through African institutions and

partner nations comes with limitations in capacity and capability and often requires

external support. With democratic elections in Mali scheduled for July 2013, the United

States should resume direct military support as early as possible in order to continue

posture the Malian military to provide security during the democratic transition.[93]

Building this partner capacity not only builds the credibility of the Malian Army, it also

has the potential to enhance United States credibility to its commitment to the people of

Sub-Saharan Africa. By delaying engagement, the United States potentially opens the

opportunity for China to gain additional leverage in the region. China's non-restrictive

engagement policy has increased Chinese national influence over this strategically

important region. On February 15, 2013, delegations from the African Union and China

met in Beijing under the Forum for China Africa Cooperation (FOCAC) to discuss

strengthening the strategic partnership between China and the African Union.[94] The

United States must not risk indirectly improving Chinese credibility in the region by

failing to remain committed to improving the military capabilities of nations to fight

terrorism.

In line with the *Defense Strategic Guidance* published in January 2012, the

United States Army prioritizes Stability and Counterinsurgency operations tenth out of

the eleven missions for the United States military.[95] Possible response options for Mali

and Nigeria do include counterterrorism and security force assistance which are listed

as the primary missions for the armed forces.[96] However, these tasks, specifically in the

case of counterterrorism, are primarily carried out by special operations forces, and may

only result in short–term effects as highlighted by Hady Amr in the case of Somalia.

With increasing economic constraints, a resource recommendation for the Department

of Defense is to raise the prioritization of the Army's mission toward Africa and

specifically on Stability and Counterinsurgency operations. One of the stated goals of

the Defense Strategic Guidance is "working with allies and partners to establish control

over ungoverned territories."[97] With the increasing number of missions for the African

Union in both Somalia and Mali, the United States should consider maintaining a force

size capable of contributing to these counterinsurgency and stability missions on the

ground in a partner capacity. This includes force structure as well as a prioritization in

training and resources necessary to operate in this complex environment while the Air Force and Navy prioritize efforts toward the Pacific.

A less resource intensive recommendation is fulfilling General Ham's request for additional National Guard support for the State Partnership Program (SPP). In his remarks before the 134th National Guard Association in September 2012, General Ham commented on his hopes for gaining four additional SPP partnerships within the next few years. In reference to these partnerships, General Ham stated "the greatest impact that the National Guard has on contributing to long–term stability in Africa is through the State Partnership Program."[98] With the reduced requirement for forces as a result of the end of the war in Iraq and the draw down in Afghanistan, this is an area for increased global engagement by the National Guard.

Conclusion

The countries in Sub-Saharan Africa, to include Mali and Nigeria, face both significant domestic and international factors contributing to instability and the resulting insurgencies.[99] Terrorism and insurgency expert, Bard O'Neill concluded African development in the post-colonial period faced the challenge of "national integration and economic underdevelopment" during the last several decades"[100] These historic instability risk factors, now compounded with the rise of radical Islamic extremists, continue to impact the development of African nations. Failure to support the security development of Mali and Nigeria risks continuing the cycle of instability plaguing Somalia. Help must take the form of a long–term commitment to the economic, political and security development of a still developing and unstable region of the world. Africa must not suffer adverse consequences as a result of the United States shifting strategic

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interest to the Pacific. Continuing the trend of episodic interest and limited engagement

in Sub–Saharan Africa will place the security of the people of the United States at risk.

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